


# Country of the Week: Uganda

Uganda has one of the youngest and most rapidly growing populations in the world. The country is incredibly diverse, and its people speak more than 30 languages, including English, Bantu, and Swahili. These diverse linguistic communities create a lovely cultural fusion of dance, cinema, and music that blend the traditional with the modern.

Ugandans greet their future with optimism and hope, as dramatic improvements in access to food, employment, education, health care, and housing have been made in recent years. Some of the country's most active supporters are also members of the YALI Network, and we are honored to highlight three of them this week.

Read on for inspiring stories about members who are raising awareness for climate change, promoting the rights of women and girls, and empowering local communities. Join their efforts and bring impact to your own community by exploring the [YALI Network Online Courses](#).

## **Raising awareness for climate change**

Zaidi Mugoya believes that change begins with him. Whether hosting a [#YALILearns event](#),  learning about the rights of women and girls, or planting trees in his hometown, Zaidi makes every effort to better Uganda.


After completing the YALI Network Online Course [Understanding Climate Change](#), Zaidi created an actionable plan to teach Ugandan youth about environmental health. With his certificate in hand, he confidently began explaining the threats of climate change. Together, he and his community have planted many trees.

Zaidi's determination and dedication were quickly noticed, and he now teaches and plants trees with many people, including school groups. "This was really good for me to do because I loved it from the beginning, [and] I got friends from the [YALI Network] Facebook group," he notes. Zaidi credits the YALI Network for guiding and improving his project as it grows. "I [have] management skills and leadership skills, which are big pillars in [my] life today."

Most recently, Zaidi has been studying the rights of women and girls — something that he feels very passionately about. He is now a trusted advocate in his region where he hosts events and speaks on the radio about the challenges women and girls regularly face. Looking to the future, Zaidi says "I am ... 19 years of age, and I am still looking at the progress of my region."

If you're interested in getting involved in your community, like the [YALI Network Facebook page](#), and access free online trainings, virtual events, and more by [visiting the YALI Network website](#).

## **Promoting the rights of women and girls**

"Most women in my community were taken as men's property thus facing domestic violence.  [Y]et they had no one to even to talk to about their marital issues," explains Ritah Namutosi. Facing such a large challenge, and passionately believing in the rights of women and girls, Ritah

knew she had to act.

After completing the YALI Network Online Course [Understanding the Rights of Women and Girls](#), Ritah set out to empower females living in Uganda. Ritah's community elected her as the "local council women representative," which allowed her to work with many different groups. "[We] secure loans from the local [g]overnment, which has empowered women economically... [M]ost of them now own small businesses like charcoal selling, poultry, piggery ... which has enabled them to feed their families and pay school fees on time."

Still, Ritah understands that the women in her community need regular support in order to achieve economic independence. "I was able to form an ongoing sensitization initiative in the community where we meet once a week and discuss issues relating to family and any other things that may result into depression," she says. She and members of the local group provide meaningful advice to women facing domestic issues. "We have been able to report ... issues like domestic violence and failure to provide child support to the police and probation and social welfare."

The rights of women and girls are vital to both men and women, and Ritah's leadership has resulted in positive responses throughout her hometown. Her community increasingly supports the education of girls, and she often provides assistance in finding school vacancies.

## Empowering local communities

Ndizeye Titus was inspired to become an active YALI Network member after watching the U.S. Ambassador to Uganda speak on local television. Ndizeye has since completed [17 YALI Network Online Courses](#), and he has hosted four [#YALILearns events](#).



Ndizeye often collaborates with local leaders to build confidence among impoverished communities. "I have taken my events to a church, school, and trading centre in my community," he explains. One notable event focused "on how poor and unemployed people can create wealth using their own hands [to make] crafts and practic[e] farming in the community."

Since hosting his first event, engagement and interest have increased exponentially. "I have been approached continuously by community members both young and old who thank me for the events and encourage me to continue," he states. While his work certainly empowers local residents, it also inspires Ndizeye to continue his positive contributions: "When my community members are thanking and encouraging me to continue with the work I am doing, I feel like my work is [truly beneficial]."

Join Ndizeye and members like him by joining the [YALI Network](#). You'll receive email updates, opportunities to collaborate with other young leaders, and access to helpful products and programs such as [YALI Network Online Courses](#) and [#YALILearns events](#)!

---